SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING The Affairs of this Session OF PARLIAMENT, 1700.

—— Quis, cum ruat arduus Æther
Compositas tenuisse Manus.——

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UMI -

Some Thoughts concerning the Affairs of this Session of Parliament, 1700.

OF all Governments *Monarchy* is the beſt, and leaſt ſubject to Inconveniences; but becauſe the Monarch is a man ſubject to Errors in Judgment, and capable of being byaſſed in his Affections, it was therefore neceſſary, that the Common-Wealth, as it gave him great Power over them, ſo it ſhould aſſigne him alſo the beſt Helps, for directing both his Will and Judgement.

The firſt Help was *Law*, which is the Rule both to King and People.

The ſecond, were certain Councills and Counſellors with whom to conſult in matters of moſt Importance, as we ſee in the *Dyets* of *Germany*, the *Courts*

of *Spain*, and the *Parliament* of *England*, without which no matters of moment can be concluded. The *Romans* had their *Senat*, and the *Grecians* their *Ephori*.

As We are happy in a Limited *Monarchical* Government, so it has succeeded well with our Kings when they have had Wise Counsellours, and have been advised by their *Parliaments* in things relating to the Publick Good.

The Nature of our *Parliament* is explained in the 8. *Par. K. Ja. 6. Act* 2. where it's said; That by the court of *Parliament* under GOD, the Kingdom hath been upholden; Rebellion, and Traiterous Subjects punished; the Good and Faithfull Preserved, and maintained, and the Laws and Acts of *Parliament* (by which all good men are Governed) are made and established, &c.

This Act was made whilst our King was yet amongst Our selves, but no sooner did We loose Him, than We dwindled all of a sudden into old Age;

and

and altho' the whole Island has been Christened by the Name of *Great Britain*, the *English* only have reaped the Honour and Advantage of this Union.

Henry VII. of *England* said to one of his Counsellours, that the Marriage between his Daughter, and Our King, would make *Scotland* an Accession to the Crown of *England*, some Way or other: nor could it be otherways, when our Kings, ever since the Union, have lived in *England*, and that the *English* being made secret to our nearest Concerns have had the Art to Influence Our Counsells for their own Interest.

Kingdoms are United either when they become the same People in Subjection: (such is our Union with *England*) or when they are United in Laws and Interest, so that they become the same Common-Wealth: one Head Rules them, and all inferiour Members conspire for the Prosperity of the whole Body.

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The laſt of theſe Unions is Good for both: Whereas the firſt is neither laſting, nor can all Parties be juſtly dealt with by the ſame Maſter. We Knovv *Portugall* ſoon Revolted from *Spain*.

If We are Stated, That, as the Poorer Part of this Iſland, We are to Enjoy nothing that the *Engliſh* may think of ill Conſequence to them; The Queſtion is, *Whether We ſhould prefer their Intereſt or our own?* And ſurely, a juſt King who is Father of both countries, muſt be put to it, by Deliberate Reflections upon the Oaths He has taken to both Kingdoms.

Our *Secretaries* who have been obliged to attend at Court, were the Perſons by whom the Advice of the Privy Council concerning the Affairs of this Nation, has been communicated to our Kings, and by whom their Majeſties have ſignified their Will to the Subject; But it may be doubted whether the Advice, followed by thoſe Kings, has

has been that of *England*, that of the *Secretaries*, or that of the *Council* here

By the great Truſt Our *Secretaries* have, they ought to be Guardians to their Country; that by their Vigilant Care and Probity, Subjects may find experimentally, that they are as much for their Advantage, as they have Power and Dignitie.

No privat Advantage, no Self-Ends ſhould move them to Betray their Charge; No *Engliſh* Dependence ſhould Dare them; but by their Virtue they ſhould raiſe their Character above the Envy of wicked men.

They ſhould mind what *Tacitus* ſays; that tho' the Deliberations of all other men do commonly conſiſt in the Conſiderations of Utility, and Profit, yet the ſtate of a Prince is ſuch that He ought principalie to reſpect Fame and Reputation.

It ſhould be a great Awe upon them to be Honeſt; that Favorites of Princes have

have been so often Sacrificed to an oppressed People.

Plutarch sayeth that the Counsellors of *Dionysius*, *Phalaris*, and *Apollodorus*, were justlie Tormented by the People; becauseHe who Seduceth a Prince deserveth no less to be abhor'd of all men, than one that should Poyson a publick Fountain, whereof all men should Drink.

Henry VIII. in the Beginning of his Reign, to satisfie his *English* Subjects who Importuned Him for Justice against *Emson* and *Dudly* for the evill Council they had given to *Henry* VII. in matters of Exactions and Impositions, delivered them to be Punished according to Law.

We might be liable to suffer, if we had no other to informe His Majesty, about our Ease and Riches, than *Secretaries* and *Courtiers*, from whom must depend the Character of every one in Publick Trust here.

It's our *Parliaments* therefore that have

have taken Notice of our Concerns, and it is to this *Parliament* we have Recourse for our present Affairs; seeing His Majestie is for the present so occupied in Managing the Interests of *England* and *Holland*, that He leaves tacitely to our Honourable Members of *Parliament*, not only to call misinformers to an Account, but to inform himself in every thing concerns our Good.

We would have been very happy to have had the Presence of His Majesty in this *Session* of *Parliament*, according to His Royal Promise, which has been allways necessary for us: That He might be informed at one View, what is fit to be done in every Juncture of Affairs, that He might know what part of His Kingdom Flourishes, and what part of it Languishes: That He who is above all in Honour and Authority, would be likeways Interessed for the Benefit of the Publick, and that He might have Occasion to influence His People to their Duty, by His Piety,

Justice, Valour, Clemency, and other Princely Qualities.

Noble was that Speech of *Henry* IV. of *France*, and worthy of so good a King, when he Assembled the States of his Kingdom at *Rouen* 1596. which he ends thus. *I have not called you to this Place, as my predecessors have done, to oblige you blindly to approve of my Will; I have Summoned you to Receive, to Believe, and to Follow Your Councils: In a Word, to make You my Guardians.*

How acceptable would such a discourse be to this present *Parliament*, from His Majesty? and what might we hope, but to be watched over; our Good, our Ease, and Wellfare, to be the End of His Undertakings, and the Happiness, Strength, Wealth, and Honour of our Country to be His Joy and Satisfaction.

But it's You, most Honourable Members, He makes at present Judges of every thing is for the Benefit of this Nation,

Nation, and in whose hands He Depositates His Royal Care of the People.

And surely His Majesty, who has been our Deliverer, will Abominat that Base and Dishonourable Method Publick Ministers had of Corrupting our Members of *Parliament*, by Places, Money, or Promises, to Betray the Interest of this Nation.

Every one knows the Plot was first Hatched at Court, of making or abrogating such and such Laws: some Favourit read the List of our Members of *Parliament*, and as they found a Name for their purpose, they Marked it with a Capital Letter.

If the Names marked did not exceed the Remainder of the List, so much Money was order'd to increase the Number: and this was recommended to the *Management* of the *Commissioner*, and *Secretaries*, who so soon as they Arriv'd in *Scotland*, set all Hands to Work for the Employing it to good purpose.

May all our present Members of *Parliament* Detest those Ancient Vices, and Remember, that our King knows the Reward belongs to Merit; knows the Dutie of a good Patriot, and the Treacherie of one betrays His Country; Let them all then lay to Heart the good of this Kingdom.

A Nobleman, as a Nobleman, is obliged to Imploy his Powerful Assistance to the Publick, to Maintain it with his Wealth, his Riches, and his Blood: He ought to be the Supporter and Pillar of his Country, a Defence to the Poor and oppressed, and a Check to the Violence of wicked Men. These were the Qualities have made the Predecessors of some of our Nobility so Famous in Historie, and their Memorie so dear to Posteritie.

A Gentleman who's a Member of *Parliament*, is to be Faithfull to his Trust, both out of Principles of Honour and Interest; for if We take away Honestie from him, He will dif-

fer nothing from the Refuse of Society; or by what other distinguishing Character can we know him from the Mob? If He betray the Liberties of his Countrie, how can He hope to transmit his Estate to his Heirs, or Secure his Friends from Slaverie and Oppression?

And all Members of *Parliament* are to remember, that as they are the Representatives of this Nation, so they are the Protectors of its Priviledges; who ought to Examine the Interest of the People, contribute to their Wealth and Security, be Mediators between them and His Majesty, endeavour to Remove ill Counsellours from Him; And they ought to act in every part, as Men of Probity: Being bound to Discharge their Trust, both by Duty and Oath.

Nor let them degenerate from that Boldness becomes every Man stands up for His Country; but be Couragious like *Helvidius Priscus* when he receaved a Message from the Emperour *Vespasian*, not to appear in the *Senat*, or

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if He came, not to interpose his Opinion in a Debate which was to be moved there; Sent back Word, that his Character of a Senator required his Attendance, nor would he baulk any Thing that became him according to Conscience and Duty. *Vespasian*, provoked with what He thought insolence in this Reply, Threatned to put Him to Death. To which second Message He returned thus: *Did I ever tell the Emperour that I was immortal? His Majesty, I suppose, will do His* Pleasure and I will do my Duty; it is in his Power to put Me to Death unjustly, but it is in my Power to Die Virtuously.

The preferring the Good of the Common-Wealth to any self-Interest, is the greatest Ornament of the Soul; and when all our Actions are measured in Respect of their Objects, most Noble are these which Aim most at the Publick Good; By which Virtue the *Heathen* Heroes became the Peoples *Gods*; whereas

whereas Private Interest has been allways the Business of Slaves. Who is it deserves Universal Praise, but those who designe Universal Advantages? those are deservedly called Fathers of their Country; and it should be enacted a *Parricide*, to wound the Reputation of such, whose Fame shall be like Medals, grow still the more Illustrious the older they grow.

Epaminondas is admired who was allways more busied in raising the Glory of his Country than in heaping Pelf for himself. *Decius* who threw himself amongst his Enemies to gain a Victory to his Country shall live to Eternity. And for the love of their Country it was that *Aristides* of *Athens*, being sent *Ambassador* with *Themistocles* who was his Enemie, willed him, at their Departure out of Town, that they might leave all their Emulations.

Altho' the Law of this Kingdom hath attained to a great Perfection by its few and clear Statutes, nevertheless

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as the Affairs of the World, and our own Circumstances Change, we must have *Parliaments* to Provide us with new Laws. I doubt not but our *Parliament* will take into their Consideration, our Trade, our Publick Society's, our standing Armie, and our Publick Treasurie. Upon which separatly I shall make these following Reflections.

First, Trade is necessary to any Nation that either will have Riches, or their Poor Imployed; and this is a Truth so well known, and all Nations perswaded of it, that the Thoughts of most men are turned that way.

It will be happy for us, that it be Carefully looked after; especially the Affairs of our Company Trading to *America*, and the Colony they have planted in *Darian*, in Spite, both of forreign and domestick Enemies; our just Title to which, of late, has been proved by unanswerable Arguments. So that it's the Nations Honour for Our

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Parliament both to assist our Directors with Money, and Authority to retrive their Loses; and to Frown upon all their Enemies; as being no Friends to this Country.

I'm perswaded no Tax will be more agreeable to the Subject, nor more readilie payed, than for carrying on this Project, that has made the name of our Nation Reign in all Forraigne Courts, after it has been in Oblivion for almost this Century; and which has made us Formidable to the *Spaniards*, whose Grand-Fathers thought that *Scotland* was a Province of *England*.

The Profit that may arise to Us from our *Colony*, if it prosper, is evident to everie one knows the Riches of the *Spanish* Plantations; And let us but Suppose, that we are only able to Keep in our Possession, the Port of SAINT *ANDREW* in *CALEDONIA*, it may serve to be a Magazin for all our Commodities in the *West Indies*, and to Manage a private

Trade with the *Spaniard*, to the great Advantage of this Nation.

But let Us have a more Noble End than Gain alone; The Propagation of the *CHRISTIAN RELIGION*; and if this were the only Motive, We ought to part with our Money freely for the Glory of GOD.

To Oppose our Designs we have but one declared Enemy, the King of *Spain*; who if He endeavour to drive us from our Possession, Honour obliges Us to Defend our selves.

If the *English* or *Dutch* oppress Us, contrary to the Laws of Nations, I don't see what should hinder Us to take Protection wherever it may be found.

It may be some People will object, that our *Darian* Business will occasion a War with *Spain*; or, that our Directors have mis-managed.

But in such Objections there's more Humour, than Love for the Country; because

because by the same Argument we may be Bullied out of any thing the *Spaniard*, *Dutch*, or any other Nation has a Likeing to; and even be Obliged at last, by another Step of Complaisance, to renounce the Title of a free Kingdom.

If our Directors have failed either by Ignorance or Negligence in their Designs, that should not keep Us from doing our Duty, nor to contribute all that's in our Power, for Recovering the Losses of our Companie; otherways all advantageous Projects may be balked, because ther's allways Knaves Embarqued in them.

If any Body has the Impudence to amuse us with Fisheries and other usefull Projects, it should be looked on as *Banter*; For when His Majestie has discountenanced us to gratifie the *English* or rather the *Dutch*, we don't Know what more he will doe for his Native country.

2ly. Society is a great Support to Trade, for great Interprises can be better

carryed on by the Credit of many, than by one ſingle Family or Perſon; and it has been the Practice of our Neighbouring Countries to Eſtabliſh Companies, Trading to different places of the World; and ſeverall Societies at Home to mind their Manufactories, and have protected them with particu- Laws and Immunities.

It's by Honeſty and fair Dealing that all Societies flouriſh; and vvell did the *Romans* Know that, when they puniſhed the Members of Societies for Frauds and ſupine Negligence, with Infamy. *l.* 1. *ff. de his qui not. infa. §. pœn. Inſt. de pœn. tem. litig.*

The Nature of Man is ſo prone to Wickedneſs, and ſo eaſily led away by Temptation, that if there be not ſome ſevere means taken to prevent all ill Practices: Ther's no Society but may be ruined, being expoſed to the catch of everie miſerable *Sharper*, and ſpecially here where ſome Merchants know better how to impoſe upon people that deal

deal with them, than to preſerve that Candor which becomes every honeſt Trader.

Therefore it's adviſable that it ſhould be made Death and Forfeiture to every one who is found Defrauding the Society of which he is member; and Puniſhable for all other delinquences Proportionably to their Nature. The one half of the Forfeiture ſhould be added to the ſtock of the Companie, and the other half given to Him who Accuſes the ſaid Member; by ſuch Laws ill men will be keep'd in their duty and honeſt men will not eaſily be Impoſed on.

2*ly*. Every well Governed Nation muſt be in a Poſture to Defend her ſelf, and upon good ground to aſſiſt her Allyes abroad.

Had we therefore either fear to be attaked by our Enemies; or Allyes to aſſiſt; we ſhould have all the reaſon imaginable to keep a ſtanding Armie: and I believe no Subject would repine

to

to be Taxed for It's Subsistence Proportionably to his Abilities.

Why should we be affraid for Enemies abroad, when *England* which is the better part of this Island thought it self secure immediatly after the Peace? and Kept no more Force than to Secure the Peace at Home, and prevent all Disturbances.

What Allyes have We to assist? unless We are so officious as to call those of *England* and *Holland* our Allyes; like the Highland Countrey-man who called all his Master,s Cousins his own.

At the Treatie of *Ryswyck*, was ever the name of our Nation mentioned any more than as one of his Majestries Titles? did ever any bodie endeavour to Recover our old priviledges from *France*? or what have we Reaped, for all that our Country men shewed either in Valour or Adress, for Obtaining an Honourable Peace?

We are neglected by all the World, when they don't stand in need of us;

Contempt

Contempt is our only Reward for declaring Warr against *France*, when we had not a Ship to defend our little Traide; And our Souldiers are sent home Poor and Mutilated, to eat our Bread, till such time the *Dutch* or *English* find service for them.

Is it not time to look to our selves when everie other Nation minds their particular *Interest*; and either at present, to declare our selves mercenary Fools, or to act as a wise & Free Nation?

Let our *Parliament* remember that Mercy is to be used to the Purse of the Subject; Or, how dangerous standing Armies have proved to *France*, *Denmark*, *Poland*, and other Countries; nor do we Know what *Influence* our Forces might have upon Us at present, were they ill inclined.

Let our Honourable Members consider the Poverty of our Country, the Decay of Trade, and the great Treasure our *Courtiers* and *Pensioners* carry every Year from this to *England*. So accord-

accordingly may they inform their Judgements about the Neceſſitie of a ſtanding Armie.

Alltho' it's abſolutelie neceſſarie to Disband the moſt of Our Troops; yet Juſtice and Intereſt require, that ail the well-deſerving Officers ſhould be provided with Penſions, to keep them in this Countrie, that they may be in a Readineſs to Serve when the common Defence requires.

Wiſe Men know that in Time of Neceſſitie good Officers are ill to be got; and the *Confœderats*, in the beginning of the laſt War, found that all the Advantages the *Freneh* had over them were occaſioned by the Pawneſs of their Officers. And it's alſo remarkable that the *French*, who are abſolute Maſters of War, ſet a great Value upon experienced and brave Commanders.

In Time of Peace, were We to augment our Force, it ſhould be at Sea, becauſe everie Countrie is to be Guarded according to its Situation.

Laſtly,

Lastly, As Advice is the Head, so Money moves the Springs, & strengthens the Nerves of every State; by which it Moves, Acts, and is Knit together.

No Orator is so perswasive upon the Wills and Affections of men; nor no Conqueror so Successfull by Force of Arms, as a good Treasure; and such is the Temper of most men, that they serve Money with Zeal, and obey it without Grudging.

It is our Interest according to the custome of all wise Governements, both to Provide good Funds, and to Imploy the money arising from them to proper Uses.

There's many ways to raise Money from different Funds: Yet the Ease of the subject is to be had in Consideration, and all Impositions so qualified that they may be laid upon persons proportionablie to their Estates; for it's not just that all People should be levelled, where Fortune hath made a vast difference: it's therefore that all Excises

upon Meat, Drink, Cloaths, &c. are equal for all; every Body being obliged to contribute according to their Luxurie.

If considerable Taxes were laid upon *Moneyed Men*, they would be forced to apply their Money upon Trade, where they might have the greatest Gain.

Poll and *Hearth-Money* should be avoided, being too heavie Taxes for the Poor.

Great Duties should be laid upon everie Forraigne Commodity for which the subject has not an absolute necessity, or a way to vent it abroad: and and it would be for the advantage of Trade that the Rates of his Majesties Customs were revised, and that no Exported Goods should pay Custom.

No Custom, or Taxes should be Fermed, because we know by Experience that they serve to Enrich particular People, who have the Art of Iugling with these who are Deputed to Examine their Accounts

counts: and what Favours are given to the said Publicans by his Majestie it would be for the Honour of the Government, that they were given to the Poor, who are never spared by the Insolent Tax men,

Publick Collectors should be appointed for gathering all customs, and each Collector ought to have a good Salary to make him Honest, and he obliged to find Bail for his Intromissions, so that the Nation might be Honestly served.

To imploy the Money arising from funds, to the advantage of this Kingdom, Our *Parliament* is to take notice; because all Supplyes run in Form of free gifts from the Subjects to his Majestie, for their own behoofe: Now whither these gifts are applyed to the publick good, the members of *Parliament* that gave them are most capable to Judge; and when ther's a good understanding between Prince and People, I believe the *Parliament* will do it's

Duty, that neither his Majeſtie be impoſed on, nor the People cheated out of their Money and Liberties by penſions.

We have the exemple of this preſent *Parliament* in *England*, to ſtate the preſent defects of our Treaſury; to examen the occaſions exhauſted it: and then to make the People ſenſible of the neceſſity of new Supplies.

A great many good Laws are uſefull to be made this Seſſion of *Parliament* to prevent ſeverall inconveniencies our Conſtitution is lyable too, and which might ſecure both the authoritie of future *Parliaments* and the liberties of the Subject.

All Officers, or any body that depends upon Court, ought to be declared incapable to vote in *Parliament*, becauſe ſuch Perſons are ſuppoſed to move according to the Inclination of the King, from whom they receave their bread immediatly; and that they would doe little for the Good of the Subject when

when it happens that the Intereſts of Prince and People are not the ſame.

This ſhould be one of the Preliminary Votes, and no ſooner is this Vote ſtated but all Penſioners become incapable to Vote for themſelves.

We may Learn by the *Engliſh* Practice, and our own *Parliaments*, how Convenient it is that all Overtures concerning the affairs of the People be Voted and Receave the Royall Aſſent before any Supplyes be granted to his Majeſtie.

But what may we not expect from this *Parliament*, for the meeting of which, we have ſo Languiſhed? but that all Grievances will be redreſſed that the intereſt of the Subject will be minded; and that every Law will be made that can contribute to the Glory and Safety of this Nation.

Then let Us lay aſide all Animoſities and confide in each other, Aiming all at the Publick Good; Let everie Member Act as a man of Honour and Con-

Conscience: Let our most Noble High *Commissioner* behave as above the frowns of Fortune, as one that's Mortall, whose Fame must be Transmitted to Posterity; never had any a greater Opportunity of becoming Universally Beloved, or Universally Hated; never had any such an Occasion to shew his Zeal for his Country, or his Love for his Friends: Nor ever did this Nation stand in need of so Vertuous a Person.

Let us all then Concur with good wishes and advice for Posterity to our selves, and for the Flourishing of this Kingdom.

FINIS.

UMI - 1993